

EPA-Town of Rico Worksession**12-5-03**

This paper outlines current Town activities, history of Town planning and development activities, and Town goals related to coordinating environmental issues with the Town's comprehensive development plan.

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I. Town of Rico Current Major Activities

Town is actively working on a variety of major projects related to infrastructure, development planning and economic development.

- **Water Rights:** Town's existing water rights are junior and inadequate in the basin. A 'call' has been placed on the river during the last two years due to severe drought conditions. Rico has entered into temporary water user agreements with Dolores Water Conservancy District. Town is currently pursuing a permanent water user's agreement with DWCD. Petitioning water court to change the point of diversion is expected to take 3 to 5 years and \$70,000 to \$150,000 in legal and engineering costs.
- **Drinking Water System:** The existing water system in Rico is a surface diversion from Silver Creek utilizing a bag filtration treatment system. This system is costly and problematic. Also, the flows from Silver Creek appear inadequate during low flow and severe drought periods to provide a water supply sufficient to serve future growth. Town has participated in well drilling with DWCD approximately 3 miles north of Rico in the Dolores River alluvium. Preliminary tests indicate that a substantial flow (250 g/p/m) and exceptional quality water is available in this area. Constructing a new municipal drinking water system in this area is expected to cost \$1,000,000 to \$1,400,000 and would occur in 4 to 7 years.
- **Town Wide Sewer:** Town is in the final planning and financial funding stages of a \$5,000,000 town wide sewer system. Desired start date for Phase I of the community waste water treatment system to serve the commercial core of Town is in Spring, 2005. Benefits of a Town Wide sewer system are (1) prevention of water quality degradation from the proliferation of individual septic systems, (2) economic development for the commercial area, and (3) promoting coordinated development by planned centralized waste water treatment to serve the Town and future regional development.
- **Rico Renaissance: Major PUD, Annexation, Forest Service Land Exchange:** Rico Renaissance desires to pursue development approvals as contemplated in the amendments to the Rico Regional Master Plan adopted by the Town last March. Development approvals will consist of a Forest Service land exchange to consolidate private ownership of planned development areas, Planned Unit Development approval by the Town, and Annexation of development areas into the Town of Rico.

- **River Corridor Restoration:** Town has always identified the Dolores River corridor through town as a public green-belt park. Town desires to see the Rico Regional Master Plan implemented, which includes dedication of a majority of the river corridor to Town. With public ownership of the River Corridor, Town desires to establish and implement a river restoration program similar to Telluride, Ouray, Silverton, Ridgway and other mountain communities. A River Corridor Restoration program is anticipated to take 7 to 10 years and cost \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000.
- **Economic Development:** Town is pursuing the formation of a Downtown Development Authority to provide tax increment financing for economic development. Anticipated projects include: construction of sidewalks on Main Street, relocation of street maintenance garage to the North Rico Industrial Park, development of the North Rico Industrial Park, development of a Riverside Hotel, and construction of a municipal hot springs in the Dolores River Corridor Park area.
- **Town Hall (Historic Courthouse) Restoration:** Town is completing Phase I of the restoration of the 1891 Historic Courthouse building. Phase II is funded and expected to begin in 2004. Phase III is planned to be completed by 2006.

II. History of Town Planning and Development Activities

- 1988 – Town adopts first master plan and zoning ordinance to address potential development posed by Rico Development Corporation's acquisition of the former Rico Argentine Mining Company land holdings. First master plan identifies the Dolores River Corridor as a desired public green-belt park.
- 1988 – 1994 Rico Development Corporation sells the 1950's miner's houses, develops and sells the Atlantic Cable Subdivision, and conveys several mining claims in Town to relatives of the officers of the corporation.
- Spring, 1994 – Rico Renaissance purchases significant land holdings from Rico Development Corporation.
- Summer, 1994 – Town of Rico receives funding from Department of Local Affairs with matching funds from Rico Renaissance to conduct comprehensive planning project. Project consists of mapping flood plains, wetlands, wildlife habitat and hazard areas; preparing preliminary water and waste water reports; preparing a Regional Master Plan for future development; and preparing a Land Use Code.
- 1995 – Rico Renaissance receives approval for Silverglance subdivision on south side of Town.
- 1995 – Town adopts moratorium on subdivisions until regulations are adopted.
- Spring, 1996 – Rico Regional Master Plan is adopted.
- Summer, 1996 – Rico receives Governor's Smart Growth Award for Rico Regional Master Plan in the Best Urban Design Category.
- Summer, 1996 – Town adopts second moratorium on subdivisions and development in the historic commercial core of town.

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- Fall, 1996 – St. Louis Tunnel treatment plant abandoned by Rico Development Corporation.
- 1997 – Rico Town Board continues study of community waste water treatment system and discussions with Rico Renaissance concerning the community goals for a Dolores River Corridor Park.
- 1998 – Rico successfully applies for grant funds from CDPHE to prepare a 201 Waste Water Study, grant funds from Great Outdoors Colorado to prepare a Dolores River Corridor Park plan, and grant funds from the Department of Local Affairs for a part-time Town Manager.
- 1999 – Rico successfully applies for grant funds from Department of Local Affairs for upgrades and repairs to Town water system to increase treatment capacity and alleviate turbidity problems associated with spring run-off that resulted in reoccurring boil water orders.
- November, 1999 – Town approves property tax increase for the Street Fund, in part to fund dust control on Town streets.
- November, 1999 – Town forms Home Rule Charter commission.
- May, 2000 – Town Adopts Home Rule Charter.
- Summer, 2000 – AquaHab prepares a biological/hydrological assessment of the Dolores River Corridor through Town which maps wetland areas, identifies impacted areas, and recommends restoration activities for the Dolores River Corridor.
- Summer, 2000 – Town adopts 201 Waste Water Study, then hires another engineer to conduct additional studies on alternative treatment systems and alternative sewer sites.
- Fall, 2000 – Town receives grant funding from Colorado Heritage Communities program for fiscal impact analysis of future growth.
- November, 2000 – Town voters approve property tax increase for community waste water treatment system.
- November, 2001 – Town voters approve property tax increase for full-time Town Manager position and excise tax on new construction dedicated to capital improvements.
- January, 2002 – Town hires full-time Town Manager.
- Winter, 2002 – Town receives Governor's Heritage Community and Smart Growth award for fiscal impact analysis of future growth.
- Spring, 2002 – Town successfully applies for brownfields assessment grants for Riverside Hotel redevelopment and North Light Industrial Park redevelopment.
- Fall, 2002 – Rico Renaissance submits application to amend Master Plan and enters into contract to sell 20 lots in the Dolores River Corridor for residential development.
- December, 2002 – Town enacts moratorium on development in flood plain areas until federally approved flood plain regulations can be adopted.
- March, 2003 – Town approves master plan amendment for Rico Renaissance properties that designates 60-65 acres of floodplain/river channel properties to be dedicated to town for Dolores River Corridor Park.

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- Spring, 2003- Town and Rico Historic Society receives Historic Preservation award from the Center for Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College for historic preservation efforts.
- Summer, 2003 – Town receives grant/loan award from USDA Rural Development for community waste water treatment system.
- October, 2003 – Town adopts Memorandum of Understanding with Atlantic Richfield Corporation and Rico Renaissance agreeing to pursue the formation of a non-profit corporation for mine remediation purposes.
- Fall, 2003 – Town receives another Colorado Heritage Communities, Governor's Smart Growth award for general planning activities.

III. Town Goals to pursue with EPA

- **Non-Profit Corporation:** Pursue formation of a non-profit corporation comprised of Town of Rico, Atlantic Richfield Company, and Rico Renaissance for the purpose of promoting treatment of the St. Louis Tunnel discharge, promoting other remediation activities, and promoting brownfields redevelopment projects.
- **River Corridor Restoration:** Pursue funding programs for river corridor restoration.
- **Town Streets:** Town desires to conduct sampling of Town streets. Construction of a town wide sewer system will require trenching 6' to 12' deep in virtually every street and alley. Identification of contaminated soils in town streets is desired as well as identification of receiving area for contaminated soils.
- **Blood Level Testing:** Pursue blood level testing on volunteer basis for children and others who are interested in Rico.
- **Lead Risk Education:** EPA Education Grant for informing community of health risks associated with lead, best management practices for high lead soils, and dissemination of soil sampling information.
- **Managing Contaminated Soils:** Mapping of contamination soils and adoption of institutional controls to properly manage contaminated soils during excavation and development activities.
- **Property Ownership Information:** identification of the location of regional mining claims, property ownership, point source discharges, and areas for anticipated remediation activities, and identification of title issues associated with property ownership.
- **Illegal Subdivisions:** Identify and address illegal subdivisions and/or improperly created land parcels with inaccurate metes and bounds descriptions where remediation activities are anticipated.
- **EPA Contact:** Encourage EPA to appoint a primary EPA contact person to improve effectiveness of communications with Town.
- **Communications:** Improve communications and public relations between Town, EPA and stakeholders (newsletters, press releases, community meetings).
- **Mercury:** Begin receiving information directly concerning EPA studies of mercury contamination in McPhee Reservoir.
- **Stakeholder Group:** Establish a formal stakeholders group to improve communication, coordination and participation (Town, County, DWCD, CDPHE, EPA, ARCO, Rico Renaissance, Rico Properties, Forest Service, Estate of Wayne Webster, and other property owners and/or PRPs as identified).
- **Consolidated Funding Process Grant:** Submit Consolidated Funding Process grant for Source Water Protection study of the North Dolores River Alluvium; Study of composting municipal sewer sludge for tailings revegetation; storm water system identification and study of storm water treatment improvements; Ecosystem Protection priority focus area - monitoring and assessment of aquatic ecosystem in the Dolores River Greenbelt area; Wetlands assessment and mapping in Town and in the regional development boundary area; Regional Geographic Initiative for funding assistance to promote development and progress of local partnership/stakeholder group to address various water quality impacts related to mining discharges, storm water run-off, and municipal waste water.